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Analytical document

Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada

National Household Survey, 2011

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.	not available for any reference period
..	not available for a specific reference period
...	not applicable
0	true zero or a value rounded to zero
0^s	value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
^{p}	preliminary
^{r}	revised
x	suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
^{E}	use with caution
F	too unreliable to be published
*	significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

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Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada

The National Household Survey

Highlights

Immigration

- In 2011, Canada had a foreign-born population[1] of about 6,775,800 people. They represented 20.6% of the total population, the highest proportion among the G8 countries.
- Between 2006 and 2011, around 1,162,900 foreign-born people immigrated to Canada. These recent immigrants made up 17.2% of the foreign-born population and 3.5% of the total population in Canada.
- Asia (including the Middle East) was Canada's largest source of immigrants during the past five years, although the share of immigration from Africa, Caribbean, Central and South America increased slightly.
- The vast majority of the foreign-born population lived in four provinces: Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec and Alberta, and most lived in the nation's largest urban centres.

Ethnic ancestry

- More than 200 ethnic origins were reported in the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS). In 2011, 13 different ethnic origins had surpassed the 1-million mark.

Visible minority population

- Nearly 6,264,800 people identified themselves as a member of a visible minority group. They represented 19.1% of the total population. Of these visible minorities, 30.9% were born in Canada and 65.1% were born outside the country and came to live in Canada as immigrants. A small proportion (4.0%) of the visible minority population was non-permanent residents.
- Combined, the three largest visible minority groups—South Asians, Chinese and Blacks—accounted for 61.3% of the visible minority population in 2011. They were followed by Filipinos, Latin Americans, Arabs, Southeast Asians, West Asians, Koreans and Japanese.

1. In this analysis, the foreign-born population is also referred to as the immigrant population. Immigrant is a person who is or has ever been a landed immigrant/permanent resident. This person has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Some immigrants have resided in Canada for a number of years, while others have arrived recently. Some immigrants are Canadian citizens, while others are not. Most immigrants are born outside Canada, but a small number are born in Canada. In the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), 'immigrants' include immigrants who landed in Canada prior to May 10, 2011. In this study, the foreign-born population excludes non-permanent residents. They are persons from another country, who have a work or study permit or who are refugee claimants, and any non-Canadian born family member living in Canada with them. The foreign-born population also excludes persons born outside Canada who are Canadian citizens by birth. The latter are considered part of the Canadian-born or non-immigrant population.

- As was the case with the immigrant population, the vast majority lived in Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec and Alberta. Seven out of 10 lived in the three largest census metropolitan areas: Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver.

- The visible minority population had a median age of 33.4 in 2011, compared with 40.1 for the population as a whole.[2]

Languages

- Of the immigrants who had a single mother tongue, close to one-quarter (23.8%) reported English as their mother tongue and 3.4% reported French. Among those whose mother tongue was other than Canada's two official languages, Chinese languages were most common, followed by Tagalog, a language of the Philippines, Spanish and Punjabi.

- Three-quarters (74.5%) of the foreign-born population were able to conduct a conversation in more than one language. In many cases, immigrants who could speak more than one language reported knowledge of English or French, in tandem with a non-official language: 61.2% were able to converse in English or French and one or more non-official language(s), 9.9% in English and French and one or more non-official language(s). Another 2.6% could speak English and French but not a non-official language. As well, 0.8% said they knew only non-official languages.

Religions in Canada

- Just over 22.1 million people, two-thirds of Canada's population, reported they were affiliated with a Christian religion. Roman Catholics (roughly 12,728,900) were by far the largest Christian group, with adherents to the United Church the second largest group (about 2,007,600).

- Slightly over 1 million individuals identified themselves as Muslim, representing 3.2% of the nation's total population. Hindus represented 1.5%, Sikhs 1.4%, Buddhists 1.1% and Jewish 1.0%.

- More than 7.8 million people, nearly one-quarter of the population (23.9%), had no religious affiliation.

2. The median age is the point where exactly one half of the population is older and the other half is younger.

Box 1: National Household Survey

This is the first release of data from the National Household Survey (NHS). Roughly 4.5 million households across Canada were selected for the NHS, representing about one-third of all households.

This analytical document contains the results from the NHS on immigration, place of birth, ethnic origin, visible minorities, language and religion. A companion analytical document *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit*, Catalogue no. 99-011-X2011001, analyses findings from the NHS on Aboriginal peoples.

In addition, there are three articles in the *NHS in Brief* series entitled Obtaining Canadian citizenship, Catalogue no. 99-010-X2011003, Generation status: Canadian-born children of immigrants, Catalogue no. 99-010-X2011003 and Aboriginal peoples and language, Catalogue no. 99-010-X2011003.

Further information on the National Household Survey can be found in the *National Household Survey User Guide*, Catalogue no. 99-001-X. Specific information on the quality and comparability of NHS data on immigration and ethnocultural diversity can be found in the series of reference guides for these topics.

Introduction

Canada is a multicultural society whose ethnocultural make-up has been shaped over time by immigrants and their descendents.

Each new wave of immigration has added to the nation's ethnic and cultural composition. Over time, patterns of immigration have shifted. Historically, most immigrants came from Europe. More recently, the largest group of newcomers to Canada has come from Asia (including the Middle East).

Data from the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) showed that Canada is a nation with an ethnocultural mosaic as indicated by its immigrant population, the ethnocultural backgrounds of its people, the visible minority population, linguistic characteristics and religious diversity.

Immigration

One out of 5 people in Canada's population is foreign-born

According to the first data from the 2011 NHS, Canada had a total of about 6,775,800 foreign-born individuals who arrived as immigrants. They represented 20.6% of the total population, compared with 19.8% in the 2006 Census.

Many of Canada's foreign-born have lived in the country for many years, while others were relative newcomers.

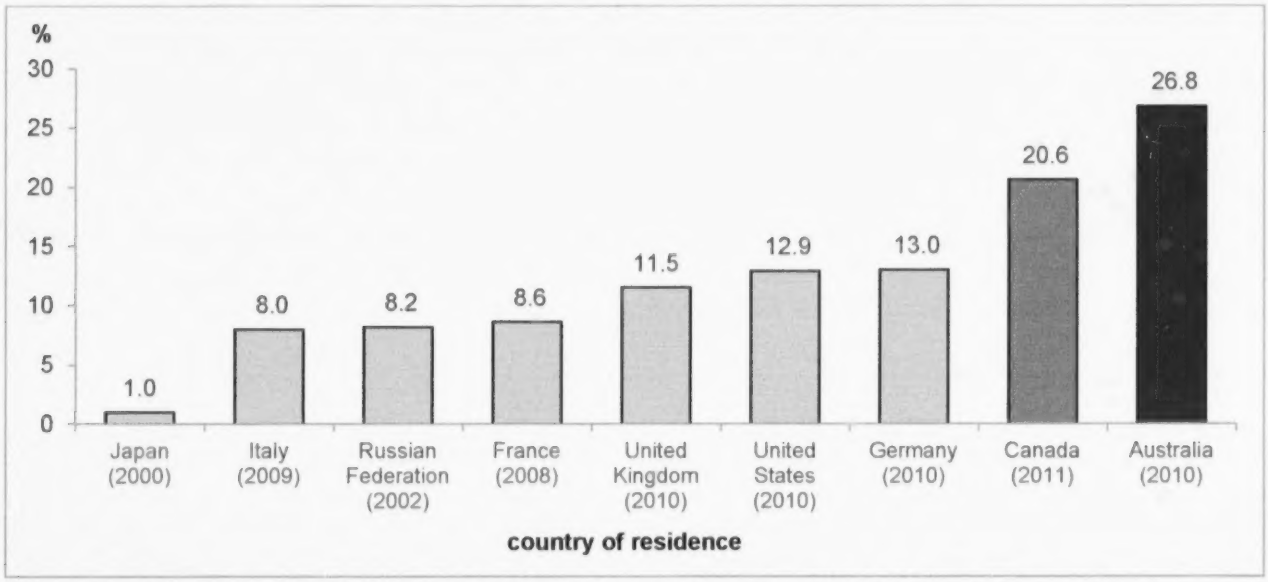
Around 1,162,900 foreign-born people immigrated in Canada between 2006 and 2011. These recent immigrants made up 17.2% of the total foreign-born population and 3.5% of the total population in Canada. Together with immigrants who came during the first five years of the millennium, nearly 2,155,000 immigrants made Canada home during the last ten years.

Highest proportion of foreign-born in the G8

Among the G8 countries, Canada had the highest proportion of foreign-born population (20.6%), well above the shares in Germany (13.0% in 2010) and the United States (12.9% in 2010).

Outside the G8 member states, Canada's proportion of foreign-born was behind that of Australia. In 2010, 26.8% of Australia's total population was born outside the country.

Figure 1 Foreign-born population, as a proportion of the total population, G8 countries and Australia



Sources: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, International Migration Outlook 2012, OECD Publishing, 2012 and Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

Asia the largest source of immigrants

Canada's immigrant population reported close to 200 countries as a place of birth in the 2011 NHS. On a regional basis, Asia (including the Middle East) remained Canada's largest source of immigrants between 2006 and 2011.

Among all recent immigrants who arrived between 2006 and 2011, roughly 661,600 or 56.9% came from Asia (including the Middle East). This proportion was down slightly from 60.0% among those who arrived between 2001 and 2005. In contrast, immigrants born in Asia accounted for 8.5% of the foreign-born population who settled in Canada prior to the 1970s.

About 159,700 European-born immigrants arrived in Canada between 2006 and 2011. They comprised the second largest group of newcomers and accounted for 13.7% of all recent immigrants.

Prior to the 1970s, immigrants born in European countries such as the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany and the Netherlands accounted for most of the immigrant sources countries. In the 2011 NHS, more than three-quarters of the immigrants who reported coming to Canada before 1971 (78.3%) were from Europe. The share of European-born immigrants from subsequent periods of immigration has declined steadily.

Increased share of recent immigrants from Africa, Caribbean, Central and South America

The 2011 NHS results showed a slight increase in the share of immigration from Africa, Caribbean, Central and South America during the past five years.

Between 2006 and 2011, about 145,700 immigrants arrived from Africa, 12.5% of the newcomers who arrived during that period. This was up from 10.3% among those who arrived during the previous five-year period.

In contrast, individuals born in Africa accounted for 1.9% of immigrants who arrived in Canada prior to 1971 and 7.3% during the 1990s.

People born in the Caribbean, Central and South America represented 12.3% of all newcomers between 2006 and 2011, up from 10.5% for those who came five years earlier. The share peaked at 17.3% for those who arrived during the 1970s, but prior to the 1970s, people from these regions accounted for just 5.4% of immigrants.

As well, at 3.9%, the share of recent immigrants from the United States increased slightly, compared to 3.2% for those who came between 2001 and 2005.

Top source countries for newcomers

The NHS results showed that the Philippines was the leading country of birth among people who immigrated to Canada between 2006 and 2011.[3] In 2011, around 152,300 newcomers were born in the Philippines, 13.1% of all newcomers.

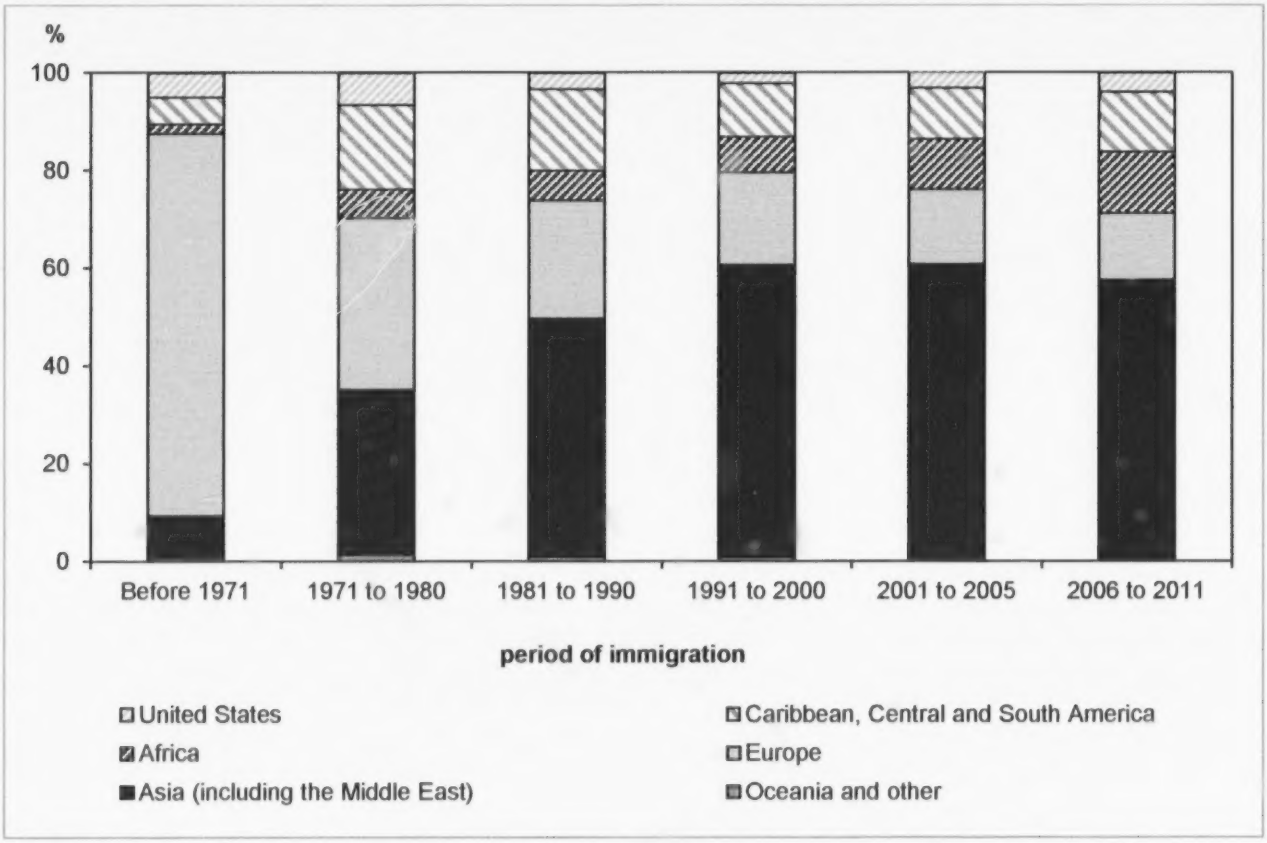
It was followed by China, from which roughly 122,100 newcomers or 10.5% arrived, and India, from which about 121,400 or 10.4% originated.

Completing the top 10 countries of birth were the United States, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, Iran, South Korea, Colombia and Mexico.

Of the recent immigrants who were born in Africa, the three leading countries of birth were Algeria, Morocco and Nigeria. Colombia, Mexico and Haiti were the top three source countries of newcomers from the Caribbean, Central and South America region. The top source countries of recent immigrants from Europe were the United Kingdom, France and the Russian Federation.

3. This result was not in line with administrative data from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada which provides the number of recent immigrants by their country of birth settling in Canada each year. A number of factors could explain this difference, such as the effects of sampling, response patterns, and under or over estimation of certain groups of recent immigrants in the NHS.

Figure 2 Region of birth of immigrants by period of immigration, Canada, 2011



Note: 'Oceania and other' includes immigrants born in Oceania, in Canada, in Saint Pierre and Miquelon and responses not included elsewhere, such as 'born at sea.'
Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

Vast majority of foreign-born live in four provinces

In 2011, the vast majority (94.8%) of Canada's foreign-born population lived in four provinces: Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec and Alberta. In comparison, these provinces accounted for 83.7% of individuals who were born in Canada.

The two provinces with the largest shares of people born outside the country were Ontario, where around 3,611,400 immigrants or 53.3% lived, and British Columbia, where about 1,191,900 immigrants or 17.6% lived. Overall, their share of immigrant population was higher than their share of Canadian population.

About 974,900 foreign-born people lived in Quebec, 14.4% of all foreign-born in Canada, while 644,100, or 9.5%, lived in Alberta.

These four provinces were also home to the majority of recent immigrants who arrived between 2006 and 2011. Of the 1,162,900 newcomers, 9 out of every 10 settled in Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta.

Ontario received 43.1%, or just over 501,000 immigrants, and British Columbia, 185,100, or 15.9%. They were the only two provinces whose share of newcomers had declined, when compared with the 2006 Census. In 2006, Ontario had received 52.3% of the newcomers and British Columbia, 16.0%. The decline in the share of newcomers in these two provinces was due to a shifting of shares to the other provinces.

Quebec was home to 19.2% of all newcomers, up slightly from 17.5% in 2006. It took in the second highest share of recent immigrants, after Ontario. Another 12.4% of recent immigrants settled in Alberta, while 5.0% went to Manitoba and 2.3% to Saskatchewan. In 2006, the shares of recent immigrants in the three Prairie provinces were 9.3%, 2.8% and 0.7%, respectively.

A smaller share of newcomers lived in the Atlantic provinces in 2011: 0.9% in Nova Scotia, 0.6% in New Brunswick, 0.2% in Prince Edward Island and 0.2% in Newfoundland and Labrador. Nonetheless, when compared with the 2006 Census, the Atlantic provinces also experienced a slight increase in their shares of newcomers.

For more information on Provinces and Territories, please refer to the *NHS Focus on Geography Series*, Catalogue no. 99-010-X2011005.

Most immigrants live in census metropolitan areas

Immigrants, especially recent arrivals, were much more likely to live in the nation's largest urban centres than people born in Canada.

Of Canada's 6.8 million immigrants in 2011, 91.0% lived in one of Canada's 33 census metropolitan areas (CMAs), compared with 63.3% of people who were born in Canada.

Overall, Canada's three largest CMAs – Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal – accounted for 63.4% of the country's immigrant population and 62.5% of recent arrivals. In contrast, the three CMAs accounted for slightly over one-third (35.2%) of the total population.

By far, the CMA of Toronto had the largest share of foreign-born of these urban centres, 37.4% of all foreign-born in Canada. About 2,537,400 immigrants lived in Toronto in 2011; they accounted for 46.0% of Toronto's total population, up slightly from 45.7% in 2006. Of all immigrants in Ontario, 7 out of 10 lived in Toronto.

Vancouver was home to 913,300 immigrants, 13.5% of the total immigrant population. They accounted for 40.0% of Vancouver's total population, about the same proportion as in 2006 (39.6%).

Montréal had 846,600 immigrants, or 12.5% of all immigrants. They represented 22.6% of Montréal's total population, compared with 20.6% in the 2006 Census.

Calgary had the fourth highest number of immigrants, at just under 313,900, or 4.6% of all immigrants. They represented 26.2% of its total population, up from 23.6% in 2006.

Ottawa - Gatineau, which was home to 3.5%, or over 235,300 of the country's foreign-born population, had the fifth highest number of foreign-born. They represented 19.4% of Ottawa - Gatineau's total population.

Most newcomers settled in the three largest urban centres

The propensity of immigrants to settle in the largest urban areas was even greater among newcomers.

The 2011 NHS data showed that most of the 1.2 million immigrants who arrived in Canada between 2006 and 2011 settled in a census metropolitan area. Slightly over three-fifths (62.5%) of these recent immigrants chose to settle in the three largest census metropolitan areas – Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver. In contrast, slightly over one-third (35.2%) of Canada's total population lived in these three CMAs.

Just over 381,700 newcomers settled in Toronto, about one-third (32.8%) of the total, the highest share. They made up 6.9% of Toronto's total population. In comparison, in the 2006 Census, 40.4% of recent immigrants at the time settled in Toronto, they accounted for 8.8% of the total population in the census metropolitan area.

About 189,700 newcomers settled in Montréal, 16.3% of the total, the second largest share. They accounted for 5.1% of Montréal's total population.

Vancouver received just over 155,100 newcomers, 13.3% of all recent immigrants. They represented 6.8% of its population.

These centres were followed by census metropolitan areas on the Prairie provinces. Calgary took in 6.1% of all newcomers, about 70,700 individuals, while another 4.3%, or 50,000, settled in Edmonton and 3.9%, 45,300, in Winnipeg. The share of newcomers in both Winnipeg and Calgary in 2011 was almost twice their share of Canada's total population.

While Toronto took in a smaller share of newcomers in 2011 than in 2006, the shares for Montréal, Calgary, Edmonton and Winnipeg in 2011 were greater than in 2006.

Table 1 Count, percentage distribution and relative ratio of total population, immigrant population and recent immigrants, in Canada and by census metropolitan areas, 2011

	Total population		Immigrants			Recent immigrants (2006 to 2011)		
	number	percentage	number	percentage	relative ratio[1]	number	percentage	relative ratio[1]
Canada	32,852,320	100.0	6,775,765	100.0	...	1,162,915	100.0	...
Toronto	5,521,235	16.8	2,537,405	37.4	2.2	381,745	32.8	2.0
Montréal	3,752,475	11.4	846,645	12.5	1.1	189,730	16.3	1.4
Vancouver	2,280,700	6.9	913,310	13.5	1.9	155,125	13.3	1.9
Ottawa - Gatineau	1,215,735	3.7	235,335	3.5	0.9	40,420	3.5	0.9
Ottawa - Gatineau (QC part)	310,830	0.9	30,910	0.5	0.5	7,760	0.7	0.7
Ottawa - Gatineau (ON part)	904,910	2.8	204,450	3.0	1.1	32,660	2.8	1.0
Calgary	1,199,125	3.7	313,880	4.6	1.3	70,700	6.1	1.7
Edmonton	1,139,580	3.5	232,195	3.4	1.0	49,930	4.3	1.2
Québec	746,685	2.3	32,880	0.5	0.2	10,665	0.9	0.4
Winnipeg	714,635	2.2	147,295	2.2	1.0	45,270	3.9	1.8
Hamilton	708,175	2.2	166,755	2.5	1.1	18,775	1.6	0.7
Kitchener - Cambridge - Waterloo	469,935	1.4	108,720	1.6	1.1	15,245	1.3	0.9
London	467,260	1.4	87,655	1.3	0.9	11,905	1.0	0.7
Halifax	384,540	1.2	31,260	0.5	0.4	8,305	0.7	0.6
St. Catharines - Niagara	383,965	1.2	64,385	1.0	0.8	5,650	0.5	0.4
Oshawa	351,690	1.1	56,175	0.8	0.8	4,080	0.4	0.3
Victoria	336,180	1.0	60,075	0.9	0.9	6,440	0.6	0.5
Windsor	315,460	1.0	70,290	1.0	1.1	9,225	0.8	0.8
Saskatoon	256,435	0.8	27,355	0.4	0.5	11,465	1.0	1.3
Regina	207,215	0.6	21,735	0.3	0.5	8,150	0.7	1.1
Sherbrooke	196,675	0.6	12,115	0.2	0.3	4,045	0.3	0.6
St. John's	193,825	0.6	5,875	0.1	0.1	1,615	0.1	0.2
Barrie	184,330	0.6	22,350	0.3	0.6	2,135	0.2	0.3
Kelowna	176,435	0.5	24,450	0.4	0.7	3,150	0.3	0.5
Abbotsford - Mission	166,680	0.5	39,035	0.6	1.1	5,935	0.5	1.0
Greater Sudbury / Grand Sudbury	158,260	0.5	9,775	0.1	0.3	665	0.1	0.1
Saguenay	154,235	0.5	1,705	0.0	0.1	535	0.0	0.1
Kingston	153,900	0.5	18,085	0.3	0.6	1,740	0.1	0.3
Trois-Rivières	146,930	0.4	4,045	0.1	0.1	1,570	0.1	0.3
Guelph	139,670	0.4	27,515	0.4	1.0	3,025	0.3	0.6
Moncton	135,520	0.4	5,995	0.1	0.2	2,250	0.2	0.5
Brantford	133,250	0.4	15,080	0.2	0.5	985	0.1	0.2
Saint John	125,010	0.4	5,365	0.1	0.2	1,290	0.1	0.3
Thunder Bay	119,140	0.4	10,895	0.2	0.4	850	0.1	0.2
Peterborough	116,175	0.4	9,495	0.1	0.4	535	0.0	0.1

... not applicable

1. This ratio shows whether the share of immigrants or recent immigrants in a given location is higher than the share of the total population in the same location. For example, if 5% of recent immigrants live in a place and the same share (5%) of the total population lives there, then the ratio will be 1.0.

Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

For more information on census metropolitan areas, census agglomerations and selected census subdivisions, please refer to the *NHS Focus on Geography Series*, Catalogue no. 99-010-X2011005.

Recent immigrants were relatively young

People tend to migrate when they are relatively young. In 2011, 58.6% of people who came to Canada since 2006 were in the core working age group between 25 and 54. A small proportion, 4.4%, was in the older working age group of 55 to 64.

Immigrant children aged 14 and under who came in the last five years accounted for 19.2% of the newcomer population, and another 14.5% were between the ages of 15 and 24. Seniors aged 65 and older represented relatively smaller proportion, 3.3%, of all recent arrivals.

The median age of newcomers in 2011 was 31.7 years (the median age is the point where exactly one half of the population is older and the other half is younger). In comparison, the median age for the total immigrant population was 47.4 and for the Canadian-born population, 37.3.

Ethnic ancestry

Ethnic origin is another aspect of the nation's ethnocultural diversity. Ethnic origin refers to the ethnic or cultural origins of the respondent's ancestors. An ancestor is someone from whom a person is descended and is usually more distant than a grandparent.

More than 200 ethnic origins were reported by respondents to the NHS. In 2011, 57.9% of the population reported one ethnic origin and the rest, 42.1%, reported more than one origin.

The list of ethnic origins includes cultural groups associated with Aboriginal peoples in Canada (First Nations [North American Indian], Métis and Inuit) and European groups that first settled in Canada, such as the English, French, Scottish and Irish.

The list also includes origins of people who settled in Canada in subsequent waves of international migration, such as German, Italian, Chinese, East Indian, Dutch, Somali and Lebanese.

Most common ethnic origins

In 2011, 13 different ethnic origins had surpassed the 1-million mark. People reported these origins either alone or in combination with other ethnic origins.

The ethnic origin most often reported in the NHS was Canadian. Just over 10,563,800 people reported Canadian as their ethnic origin, either alone or with other origins.

Canadian was followed by English, reported by 6,509,500 people; French (5,065,700); Scottish (4,715,000); Irish (4,544,900); and German (3,203,300).

The other ethnic origins that surpassed the 1-million mark were: Italian, Chinese, First Nations (North American Indian), Ukrainian, East Indian, Dutch and Polish.

Just over 1,369,100 people reported having First Nations (North American Indian) ancestry, while 447,700 reported Métis and 72,600 reported Inuit.

Ethnocultural make-up differed by generation status

The list of most frequently reported ethnic origins varied by generation status of the population, reflecting the country's immigration trends.

Since the majority of the people who were first generation in Canada were themselves immigrants, their ethnocultural backgrounds reflected that of the countries where they came from. Overall, a majority (81.5%) of the first generation reported a single ethnic origin. The top ethnic origins, either alone or in combination of other origins, reported by the first generation were Chinese, East Indian and English.

The proportion of the Canadian-born children of immigrants who reported multiple ethnic origins, at 45.4%, was higher than that of the first generation (18.5%). They were second generation individuals who were born in Canada to at least one immigrant parent. In 2011, the most frequently-reported origins by the second generation, either alone or with other origins, were English, Canadian and Scottish.

Individuals who were third generation in the country had the highest proportion of reporting multiple ethnic origins. They were individuals who were born in Canada with Canadian-born parents. At 49.6%, the proportion of reporting more than one ethnic origin was higher than the first generation (18.5%) and the second generation (45.4%).

In 2011, the most common ethnic origins reported, either alone or in combination with other origins, by individuals who were third generation were Canadian, English and French.

Visible minority population

Box 2: Visible minority

The people who identify themselves as a visible minority comprise 1 of 4 groups designated under the *Employment Equity Act*.

The *Employment Equity Act* defines as visible minorities 'persons, other than Aboriginal persons, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.' The visible minority population consists mainly of the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese.

The other three designated groups under the *Employment Equity Act* are women, Aboriginal people and people with disabilities.

One out of every 5 people a visible minority

In 2011, nearly 6,264,800 people identified themselves as a member of the visible minority population on the NHS questionnaire. They represented about 1 out of every 5 people (19.1%) in Canada's total population.

In comparison, the 2006 Census enumerated 5,068,100 individuals who identified themselves as a member of the visible minority population, 16.2% of the total population at the time.

This increase in the visible minority population was due largely to the number of immigrants who arrived in Canada in recent decades from non-European countries.

In 2011, 13.7% of newcomers were born in Europe, while another 3.9% were born in the United States. The remaining 82.4% came from Asia (including the Middle East), the Caribbean and Central and South America, Africa and Oceania and other regions.

The share of visible minorities has increased among immigrants who came in the more recent decades. The 2011 NHS data showed that visible minorities accounted for 78.0% of the immigrants who arrived between 2006 and 2011, 76.7% of those who arrived in the previous five-year period and 74.8% of immigrants who arrived in the 1990s.

In contrast, visible minorities made up 12.4% of immigrants who arrived before 1971. During the 1970s, this proportion more than quadrupled to 53.0% and further increased to 67.4% of those who arrived in the 1980s.

South Asians largest visible minority group

Combined, the three largest visible minority groups in 2011 – South Asians, Chinese and Blacks – accounted for 61.3% of the visible minority population. They were followed by Filipinos, Latin Americans, Arabs, Southeast Asians, West Asians, Koreans and Japanese.

A total of 1,567,400 individuals identified themselves as South Asian, the largest group. They accounted for one-quarter (25.0%) of the total visible minority population and 4.8% of Canada's total population. South Asians were also the largest visible minority group recorded in the 2006 Census. Two-thirds of South Asians reported East Indian ethnic ancestry, 9.3% reported Pakistani, 8.5% reported Sri Lankan and 4.7% reported Punjabi origins. These origins were reported by South Asians either alone or with other origins.

The second largest visible minority group was Chinese, who numbered just over 1,324,700. They made up 21.1% of the visible minority population and 4.0% of the total population. A majority (96.8%) of the Chinese visible minorities reported Chinese ethnic ancestry, either alone or in combination of other ancestries. A small proportion of Chinese visible minorities reported multiple ethnic origins (8.6%).

Just under 945,700 individuals identified themselves as Blacks, the third largest group. They made up 15.1% of the visible minority population and 2.9% of the total population.

In 2011, 29.8% of Blacks reported multiple ethnic origins. The top ancestral origins among Blacks were Caribbean and African such as Jamaican (22.8%), Haitian (13.9%), Somali (4.4%) and Trinidadian/Tobagonian (3.7%). These origins were reported by Blacks either alone or with other origins. There were also Blacks who reported British Isles (10.9%), Canadian (10.8%) and French (4.3%) origins.

Most visible minorities lived in urban centres

As was the case with the immigrant population, the vast majority (95.2%) of visible minorities lived in Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec and Alberta. In Ontario, nearly 3,279,600 people identified themselves as a member of a visible minority group, more than one-half (52.3%) of the total visible minority population.

Visible minorities accounted for the highest proportion of the provincial population in British Columbia (27.3%), where they numbered nearly 1.2 million. In Ontario where the largest number of visible minorities lived in 2011, slightly over one-quarter (25.9%) of its population belonged to a visible minority. In Alberta, visible minorities represented 18.4% of the population in the province, and in Quebec, 11.0%.

Most of Canada's visible minorities (95.9%) lived in census metropolitan areas (CMAs), compared with 69.3% of the total population. The CMAs of Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver alone were home to 7 out of 10 visible minorities, compared with just over one-third (35.2%) of the total population.

The vast majority (85.1%) of the Toronto CMA's 2.6 million visible minorities lived in four municipalities: the city of Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton and Markham. In comparison, these municipalities were home to 74.4% of Toronto's total population. Among these municipalities, Markham had the highest proportion of visible minorities, they accounted for 72.3% of its population. Visible minorities made up 66.4% of Brampton's population, 53.7% of Mississauga's and 49.1% of the population of the city of Toronto.

The Vancouver CMA was home to 1.0 million visible minorities, or 16.4% of all visible minorities in Canada. They accounted for 45.2% of the population in Vancouver. Within the Vancouver CMA, the municipalities of Richmond (70.4%), Greater Vancouver A (62.2%), Burnaby (59.5%), Surrey (52.6%) and the city of Vancouver (51.8%) had higher proportions of visible minorities than the average for the whole Vancouver metropolitan area.

In the case of Montréal CMA where just over 762,300 visible minorities lived, visible minorities made up 20.3% of the population in the CMA. The municipalities of Montréal (67.0%), Laval (10.7%), Longueuil (4.2%) and Brossard (4.0%) were home to 85.8% of all visible minorities in the CMA of Montréal. Visible minorities made up close to two-fifths (38.3%) of the population in Brossard, the highest proportion in all the municipalities in Montréal CMA.

In addition to the CMAs of Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal, the CMAs of Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa - Gatineau, Winnipeg and Hamilton all had populations of at least 100,000 visible minorities in 2011.

Slightly over one-half (53.2%) of South Asians lived in Toronto while 16.1% lived in Vancouver. Toronto was home to 40.1% of Chinese, and Vancouver to 31.1% of Chinese.

Among the Black population, 42.0% lived in Toronto, and 22.9% in Montréal.

In Montréal, Blacks were the largest visible minority group, accounting for 28.4% of its visible minority population. Blacks were followed by Arabs (19.7%) and Latin Americans (12.9%).

Table 2 Visible minority population and top three visible minority groups, selected census metropolitan areas, Canada, 2011

	Total population	Visible minority population		
	number	number	percentage	Top 3 Visible minority groups
Canada	32,852,325	6,264,755	19.1	South Asian, Chinese, Black
Toronto	5,521,235	2,596,420	47.0	South Asian, Chinese, Black
Montréal	3,752,475	762,325	20.3	Black, Arab, Latin American
Vancouver	2,280,695	1,030,235	45.2	Chinese, South Asian, Filipino
Ottawa - Gatineau	1,215,735	234,015	19.2	Black, Arab, Chinese
Calgary	1,199,125	337,420	28.1	South Asian, Chinese, Filipino
Edmonton	1,139,585	254,990	22.4	South Asian, Chinese, Filipino
Winnipeg	714,635	140,770	19.7	Filipino, South Asian, Black
Hamilton	708,175	101,600	14.3	South Asian, Black, Chinese

Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

Three in 10 visible minorities were Canadian-born

Of the 6.3 million people who identified themselves as a member of the visible minority population in 2011, 30.9% were born in Canada, 65.1% were born outside the country and came to live as immigrants. A small proportion (4.0%) of the visible minority population was non-permanent residents.

These proportions varied from one group of visible minorities to another, partly because of immigration patterns. In general, groups that have long established histories in Canada and relatively little recent immigration have higher proportions of people born in Canada.

For example, Japanese had a relatively long history in Canada and had no major immigration in recent decades. Of the roughly 87,300 individuals who identified themselves as Japanese, 63.1% or 55,000 individuals were born in Canada, the largest such proportion. Almost one-third (32.3%) were born in Canada to parents who were also born in Canada. That is, they were third-generation or more in Canada. The proportion of third-generation or more among the Japanese was also the highest in all visible minority groups.

Blacks had the second largest proportion of Canadian-born among all visible minority groups, 43.2%. Among Blacks, 8.9% were third generation or more.

Immigration in recent decades has also added to the Black visible minority group. Slightly over one-half (53.1%) of Canada's Blacks were foreign-born and came to live as immigrants. Of these foreign-born Blacks, 23.5% arrived between 2006 and 2011. The top three countries of birth for the recent immigrants who identified themselves as Black were: Haiti, Nigeria and Jamaica.

Among Canada's two largest visible minority groups, 30.7% of South Asians and 26.7% of Chinese were born in Canada. Although both groups have a long history in Canada, immigration in recent decades has kept the proportion of foreign-born relatively high.

In 2011, 20.6% of immigrants who identified as South Asian came to Canada between 2006 and 2011. The top three source countries were India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. A small proportion, 1.5%, of South Asians was Canadian-born with both parents born in Canada.

As well, 15.3% of foreign-born people who reported that they were Chinese arrived during the past five years. The majority (85.0%) were immigrants born in China, 6.3% were immigrants born in Taiwan and 3.0% were immigrants born in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. A small proportion (2.8%) of Chinese were third generation or more.

Visible minority population relatively young

The visible minority population was generally younger than the overall total population. This is mostly due to the fact that many visible minorities were immigrants who came to Canada in recent decades. People tend to migrate when they are younger, and they are more likely to be at the stage in life when they would have young children.

The 2011 NHS data showed that the visible minority population had a median age of 33.4, compared with 40.1 years for the population as a whole.

Blacks, which had a median age of 29.5 years, were the youngest visible minority group. Among Blacks, 27.0% were aged 14 and under, compared with 17.0% of the total population and 21.5% of the overall visible minority population.

Arabs, the second youngest group, had a median age of 30.2. South Asians, Canada's largest visible minority group, had a median age of 32.8, while the Chinese, the second largest, had a median age of 38.6.

Languages

Linguistic diversity and immigration

Canada is a country of linguistic diversity. The nation is becoming more and more a multilingual society in the wake of growing numbers of immigrants whose mother tongue is neither English nor French. (Mother tongue is defined as the first language a person learned at home in childhood and still understood at the time of the survey.)

In addition to English and French, the 2011 NHS estimated more than 200 languages as mother tongue.

In 2011, a majority (96.8%) of the 6.8 million immigrants reported one mother tongue. A small proportion, 3.2%, reported multiple mother tongues.

Of the immigrant population who reported single mother tongue, about 1.6 million, or 23.8%, reported that their mother tongue was English. Another 3.4% reported French as their mother tongue. The proportion of immigrants whose mother tongue was French was higher in Quebec, 18.6%.

The remaining 72.8% of the immigrant population reported a mother tongue other than English or French.

Among the immigrants whose mother tongue was other than English or French, Chinese languages were most common mother tongues. A total of about 852,700 individuals reported these languages. The largest share, 38.2%, simply said their mother tongue was Chinese. Another 34.4% reported Cantonese and 24.6% reported Mandarin. The remaining 2.8% reported other Chinese languages. In total, Chinese languages were reported by 13.0% of the foreign-born population with single mother tongue.

The Chinese languages were followed by Tagalog, a language of the Philippines, reported by almost 320,100 people; Spanish, reported by 306,700; and Punjabi, by 305,400. Completing the top 10 were Arabic, Italian, German, Portuguese, Persian (Farsi) and Polish.

Canada's linguistic landscape evolved with different waves of immigration. Among immigrants who arrived prior to the 1970s, the most common mother tongues were English, Italian, German and Dutch. The most common mother tongues among recent immigrants were English, Chinese (included individuals who simply reported Chinese and Mandarin), Tagalog and Spanish.

Knowledge of languages

The 2011 NHS data showed a majority (74.5%) of Canada's foreign-born population was able to conduct a conversation in more than one language, compared to 36.6% of the total population.

Of the roughly 6.8 million immigrants in Canada, slightly over one-half (54.6%) could speak two languages and one fifth (19.9%) had knowledge of at least three languages.

In many cases, immigrants who could speak more than one language reported knowledge of English or French, in tandem with a non-official language. Among all immigrants, 61.2% were able to converse in English or French and one or more non-official language(s), 9.9% in English and French and one or more non-official language(s). Another 2.6% could speak English and French but not a non-official language. A small proportion (0.8%) said they knew only non official languages.

In contrast, the most common combination of linguistic ability for the total population (17.6%) was English and French, with or without knowledge of other language(s).

While a majority (93.5%) of the foreign-born population was able to converse in English and/or French, 6.5% of all immigrants reported that they did not know either official language in 2011.

The proportion of non-English non-French speaking immigrants declined with time in the country as immigrants who lived in Canada for a longer period of time would have had more time to learn the official language(s). Among the recent immigrants who came to Canada between 2006 and 2011, 9.0% were able to converse only in non-official language(s). This compares with 3.4% of those who arrived before the 1970s.

Table 3 Number of languages spoken by immigrant status and period of immigration, Canada, 2011

Number of languages spoken	Total population		Non-immigrants		Immigrants		Recent immigrants (2006 to 2011)	
	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage	number	percentage
Total population	32,852,320	100.0	25,720,170	100.0	6,775,765	100.0	1,162,915	100.0
Speaks one language	20,819,655	63.4	19,014,880	73.9	1,725,700	25.5	226,210	19.5
English only	16,542,730	50.4	15,208,855	59.1	1,278,505	18.9	116,450	10.0
French only	3,774,750	11.5	3,709,135	14.4	59,865	0.9	17,995	1.5
Non-official language only[1]	502,175	1.5	96,890	0.4	387,330	5.7	91,765	7.9
Speaks more than one language	12,032,665	36.6	6,705,290	26.1	5,050,055	74.5	936,695	80.5
Both official languages only	4,369,345	13.3	4,178,205	16.2	176,830	2.6	24,965	2.1
Both official languages and one or more non-official languages[1]	1,402,910	4.3	699,455	2.7	673,305	9.9	121,680	10.5
One official language and one or more non-official languages[1]	6,206,660	18.9	1,826,150	7.1	4,149,060	61.2	776,975	66.8
Multiple non-official languages only[1]	53,750	0.2	1,480	0.0	50,860	0.8	13,075	1.1

1. Non-official languages included Aboriginal languages. Less than 0.1% of the total immigrant population and almost 0.0% of all recent immigrants reported knowledge of Aboriginal language(s).

Note: Number of languages spoken data are derived from information on knowledge of official languages and knowledge of non-official languages.

Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

Religions in Canada

Box 3: Religion

The 2011 NHS collected information on religious affiliation only, regardless of whether respondents practised their religion, such as attendance at religious activities. Information on religious practice could be found from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS surveys adults aged 15 and over living in private households in the 10 provinces. The latest information on religious practice from the GSS was 2011.

Two-thirds of the population affiliated with Christian faith

According to the 2011 NHS, the largest religion in Canada was Christianity. Of the roughly 32,852,300 people represented in the NHS, about 22,102,700, or just over two-thirds (67.3%), reported that they were affiliated with a Christian religion.

Consistent with changing immigration patterns, there were growing proportions of the population who reported religious affiliations other than Christian. These religions included Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist. In 2011, about 2,373,700 people, or 7.2% of Canada's population, reported affiliation with one of these religions. This was up from 4.9% a decade earlier, as recorded in the 2001 Census.

The 2011 NHS data also showed that roughly 329,500 people identified themselves as Jewish, 1.0% of the population.

About 7,850,600 people, nearly one-quarter of the population (23.9%), had no religious affiliation. This was up from 16.5% a decade earlier, as recorded in the 2001 Census.

Roman Catholics largest Christian religious group

Roman Catholics were the largest Christian religious group in 2011. Almost 12,728,900 people identified themselves as Roman Catholic, representing 38.7% of Canada's population as a whole.

The second largest Christian group were those affiliated with the United Church, with just under 2,007,600 people, or 6.1% of the total population.

The third largest Christian denomination was Anglican, reported by about 1,631,800 people who represented 5.0% of the total population.

Another 4.5% of the population simply said they were Christian. Baptists formed the fifth largest denomination among those of Christian faith, representing 1.9% of the population.

As well, 1.7% of the total population, or about 550,700 people, identified themselves as members of a Christian Orthodox religion. The largest group was Greek Orthodox whose adherents numbered roughly 220,300 or 40.0% of the Christian Orthodox.

Increased share of recent immigrants were Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist

People who reported Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist had a smaller presence in Canada. Among these groups, Muslim was the largest. In 2011, just over 1 million individuals identified themselves as Muslim on the NHS. They represented 3.2% of the nation's total population, up from 2.0% recorded in the 2001 Census.

Just under 498,000 people identified themselves as Hindu, representing 1.5% of the population. About 455,000 people reported they were affiliated with the Sikh religion, 1.4% of the population, while there were around 366,800 Buddhists, 1.1% of the population.

In 2011, the median age of Canada's Muslim population was 28.9 years of age, while the median age for the Sikh population was 32.8 and the Hindu population, 34.2. In contrast, the median age for the larger Christian groups was higher. The median age of individuals who identified themselves as Roman Catholics in 2011 was 42.9; Anglican, 51.1; and United Church, 52.3.

Recent immigration trends were a key factor in the presence of some religions in Canada. Those reporting Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist made up 2.9% of immigrants who came before 1971. But they accounted for 33.0% of immigrants who arrived between 2001 and 2011.

Immigrants who arrived in earlier decades were predominantly affiliated with the Christian faith. In 2011, 78.4% of the immigrants who came prior to 1971 identified themselves as Christians. Christian still made up the largest share of immigrants who came recently, 41.7% of those who came between 2001 and 2005 and 47.5% of newcomers of the last five years, but their share has declined.

In 2011, 16.0% of immigrants who came before 1971 had no religious affiliation. This proportion rose to 22.0% among those who came between 2001 and 2005, and 19.5% of the recent immigrants. On average, people who had no religious affiliation tended to be younger than the general population. Their median age in 2011 was 32.7.

Among Muslim immigrants who came to Canada between 2006 and 2011, the largest share came from Pakistan. Recent immigrants who reported Hindu or Sikh religion came mainly from India, while most Buddhists came from China. Among recent immigrants with no religious affiliation, the top source country was China.

Traditional Aboriginal spirituality

Just over 64,900 people reported in the NHS that they were affiliated with traditional Aboriginal spirituality. They represented 4.5% of the Aboriginal population and 0.2% of the population as a whole.

Most of the people who affiliated with traditional Aboriginal spirituality resided in Ontario (24.5%) and the Western provinces of Alberta (23.3%), Saskatchewan (18.9%) and British Columbia (15.9%).

Provincial and sub-provincial

The largest share of Roman Catholics (45.3%) resided in Quebec, followed by Ontario, 31.0%.

Ontario was also home to 73.6% of the Hindu population in 2011, as well as 55.2% of the Muslim population and 44.6% of the Buddhist population. The roughly 582,000 Muslims who lived in Ontario represented 4.6% of the province's population. The roughly 366,700 individuals who identified as Hindu accounted for 2.9% of Ontario's population and Buddhists, about 163,800, made-up 1.3% of the population.

Two-thirds of Canada's 1 million Muslim population lived in the three largest census metropolitan areas (CMAs) combined—Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver. Toronto had the largest population of Muslims, at just over 424,900. Montréal had just over 221,000 and Vancouver about 73,200.

Among the 455,000 Sikhs in Canada, 44.2% lived in British Columbia and 39.5% lived in Ontario. Sikhs represented 4.7% of British Columbia's population and 1.4% of Ontario's population.

Slightly over three-quarters (77.5%) of British Columbia's Sikh population, just over 155,900, lived in the CMA of Vancouver, while another about 28,200 lived in Abbotsford - Mission.

Of Ontario's Hindu population, the vast majority (88.7%) lived in the CMA of Toronto.

The share of people with no religious affiliation was highest in Ontario and British Columbia. More than 1,165,000 people in the CMA of Toronto, about 21.1% of its population, had no religious affiliation, as did 945,400 people in the CMA of Vancouver, or 41.5% of its population.

Additional information

Additional information on immigration and ethnocultural diversity can be found in the *NHS Data Tables*, Catalogue nos. 99-010-X2011026 through 99-010-X2011034, the *NHS Profile*, Catalogue no. 99-010-X, as well as in the *NHS Focus on Geography Series*, Catalogue no. 99-010-X2011005.

For details on the concepts, definitions, universes, variables and geographic terms used in the 2011 National Household Survey, please consult the *National Household Survey Dictionary*, Catalogue no. 99-000-X. For detailed explanations on concepts and for information on data quality, please refer to the reference guides on the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) website.

Note to readers

Random rounding and percentage distributions: To ensure the confidentiality of responses collected for the 2011 National Household Survey while maintaining the quality of the results, a random rounding process is used to alter the values reported in individual cells. As a result, when these data are summed or grouped, the total value may not match the sum of the individual values, since the total and subtotals are independently rounded. Similarly, percentage distributions, which are calculated on rounded data, may not necessarily add up to 100%.

Due to random rounding, estimates and percentages may vary slightly between different 2011 National Household Survey products, such as the analytical documents and various data tables.

Comparability between estimates from the 2006 Census long form and the 2011 National Household Survey estimates: When comparing estimates from the 2006 Census long form and estimates from the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) users should take into account the fact that the two sources represent different populations. The target population for the 2006 Census long form includes usual residents in collective dwellings and persons living abroad whereas the target population for the NHS excludes them. Moreover, the NHS estimates are derived from a voluntary survey and are therefore subject to potentially higher non-response error than those derived from the 2006 Census long form.

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